

Selections

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Creating pixel selections

Pixel selections can be created for focused editing of specific pixel regions. Selection boundaries are defined depending on whether individual pixels are included or excluded.



About pixel selections

A pixel selection is simply a drawn area on your image (bounded by a flashing dashed line, often called 'marching ants'). Various tools for pixel selections are available in the Pixel Persona. A selection is created for various reasons:

- To limit editing (e.g., painting, applying fills, etc.) to within that selection area only.
- To selectively copy pixels.
- As a precursor to creating a mask layer.

- To draw areas for removal (cutout).

Selection boundaries are defined depending on whether individual pixels are included or excluded.

Once your selection has been created, you can invert it so all included pixels are excluded and vice versa.

Pixel selections and RAW layers

In Affinity, you can perform pixel selection on RAW layers, which opens up a number of options for various flexible workflows.

Note the following behaviors when working with RAW layers, with a pixel selection active and an image layer selected in the panel:

- Deleting the selection will mask the layer rather than delete it entirely from the layer stack. This aids local editing workflows, especially when targeting inverted selection areas.
- Duplicating action will create a new pixel layer with just the selected pixel data.

 You can use the **Assistant** options (found in the app's **Settings**) to change the above default behaviors.

Additionally, the following can be done with RAW layers:

- **Merge Down** and **Merge Visible**—available via a Right-click a layer in the panel.
- You can access the **Develop Persona**—for simplified workflows with global adjustments in mind mostly, image layers are rasterized to enter this dedicated develop space. This behavior can be controlled via **Assistant** options (found in the app's **Settings**).

Selection tools

You can create a pixel selection using the [Selection Brush Tool](#) or [Marquee Selection Tools](#) or base it on a layer. Using the [Flood Select Tool](#), you can also define a selection of similar color value pixels with a single click. Selections created using the Marquee tools align to individual pixels.

Once your selection has been created, you can invert it so all included pixels are excluded and vice versa.

There are several tools you can use to create pixel selections:

-  **Selection Brush Tool** (see [Selection Brush Tool](#))
-  **Flood Select Tool** (see [Flooding pixel selections](#))
-  **Rectangular Marquee Tool**
-  **Elliptical Marquee Tool**
-  **Column Marquee Tool**
-  **Row Marquee Tool**
-  **Freehand Selection**

Selection modes

When working with, and creating, selections, you may have access to the following **Modes** which affect how your selection develops:

-  **New**—cancels all current selections and creates a new selection.
-  **Add**—adds areas to the current selection. If there is no selection in place, a new selection will be created.
-  **Subtract**—removes areas from the current selection.
-  **Intersect**—a new selection area is created from the overlap between the newly added selection area and the current selection.

▼ To paint a pixel selection:

1. From the **Tools** panel, select the **Selection Brush Tool**.
2. Adjust the settings on the context toolbar.
3. Drag on your page.



Modifier keys

When using the Selection Brush Tool, the following modifier keys can be used to aid in the creation of selections:

- The **Ctrl** key temporarily toggles **Snap to edges** setting.
- The **Alt** key automatically removes areas from the current selection.
- Drag with left and right button down to automatically add areas to the current selection.

▼ To create a pixel selection using a Marquee Selection tool:

1. From the **Tools** panel, select the **Rectangular**, **Elliptical**, **Row** or **Column Marquee Tool**.
2. Adjust the settings on the context toolbar.
3. Drag on your page.



Modifier keys

When using the Marquee Selection tools, the following modifier keys can be used to aid in the creation of selections:

- Pressing the **Ctrl** key while dragging constrains the marquee's proportions.
- Pressing the **Shift** key while dragging adds to the current selection.
- Pressing the **Alt** key while dragging removes areas from the current selection.
- Pressing the **Ctrl** key while dragging inside the current marquee selection repositions it.

▼ To draw a pixel selection:

1. From the **Tools** panel, select the **Freehand Selection Tool**.
2. On the context toolbar, choose a selection **Type**.
3. Do one of the following:
 - With **Freehand** selected, drag on the page to draw the edge of the selection and release to close the selection.
 - With **Polygon** selected, click to define the beginning of the selection and then click for every change in direction.
 - With **Magnetic** selected, click to define the beginning of the selection and then click to place a custom node position. Automatic nodes will be placed along distinct image edges as the cursor moves.
4. Double-click to close the selection (**Polygon** and **Magnetic** only).



Modifier keys

When using the Freehand Selection Tool, the following modifier keys can be used to aid in the creation of selections:

- The **Shift** key temporarily switches to **Polygonal** if using **Freehand**.

- The **Shift** key temporarily switches between **Polygonal** and **Magnetic**.
- If using **Polygonal** and **Magnetic**, dragging will temporarily invoke **Freehand**.
- Holding the **Alt** key temporarily switches the mode to Subtract.

▼ To create a pixel selection from a layer:

- On the **Layers** panel, click the chosen layer's thumbnail while pressing the **Ctrl** key.

▼ To remove a pixel selection:

- From the **Select** menu, select **Deselect**.

▼ To invert a marquee selection:

- With a selection in place, from the **Select** menu, select **Invert Pixel Selection**.

SEE ALSO:

[Range pixel selections](#)

[Sampled color pixel selections](#)

[Modifying pixel selections](#)

[Marquee Selection Tools](#)

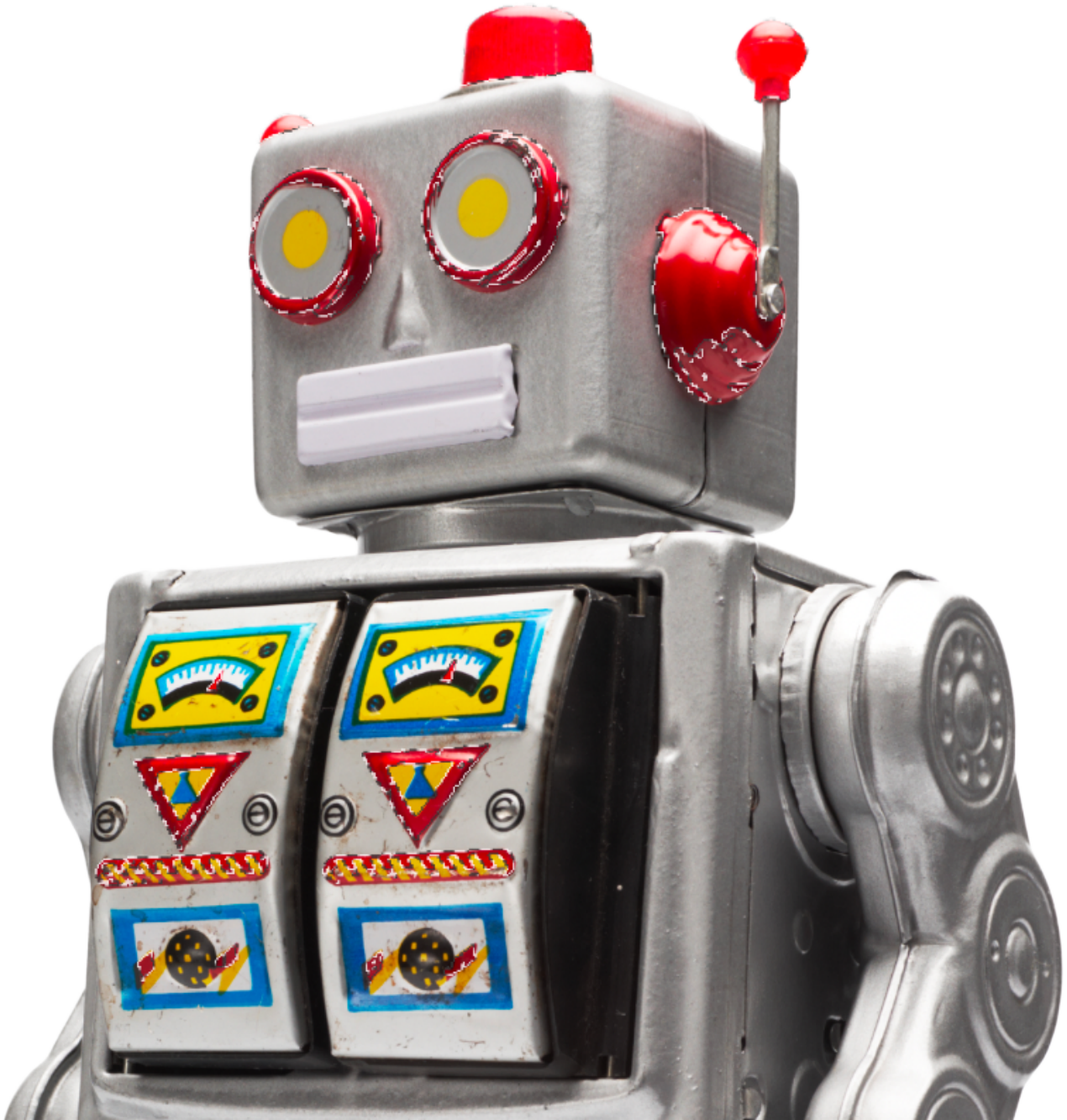
[Selection Brush Tool](#)

[Flood Select Tool](#)

[Keyboard shortcuts for selection](#)

Range pixel selections

In the Pixel Persona, you can create a pixel selection using color or tonal ranges from your image.



Pixel selection of red color range.

If you decide to create a selection based on a color or tonal range, your image is analyzed and all pixels which fall into the chosen range are included in the selection. Pixels which are not in the chosen range are excluded.

Color and tonal range selections are available from the **Select** menu. These include:

- From the **Color Range** submenu:
 - **Select Reds**
 - **Select Blues**

- **Select Greens**
 - From the **Tonal Range** submenu:
 - **Select Midtones**
 - **Select Shadows**
 - **Select Highlights**
-

SEE ALSO:

[Creating pixel selections](#)

[Sampled color pixel selections](#)



Sampled color pixel selections

In the Pixel Persona, you can create a pixel selection by sampling colors from a pixel layer.

Settings

The following settings can be adjusted from the dialog:

- **Tolerance**—determines how closely pixels must match the selected color to be included in the selection. For lower tolerance settings, pixels must be very close in value to the clicked pixel. For higher tolerance settings, pixel color can vary widely from the clicked pixel. Drag the slider to set the value.
- **Model**—determines the color model used when sampling. Select from the pop-up menu.

▼ To create a pixel selection from a sampled color:

1. Select a pixel layer.
2. From the **Select** menu, choose **Select Sampled Color**.
3. Click on your pixel layer to select the sampled color.
4. Adjust the settings in the dialog.
5. Click **Apply**.

SEE ALSO:

[Creating pixel selections](#)

[Range pixel selections](#)

Modifying pixel selections

In the Pixel Persona, once you have a pixel selection in place, it can be modified in several ways.

You can modify your pixel selection by enlarging or shrinking it, applying a feather to its edge, and/or by smoothing its curve. These options are available from the **Select** menu as **Grow/Shrink**, **Feather**, and **Smooth**, respectively.



Settings

The following settings can be adjusted from the relevant dialogs:

- **Radius**—controls the extent of the effect.
 - Negative values for **Grow/Shrink** will shrink the selection while positive values enlarge it.
- **Circular**—if this option is unchecked (default), resizing honors the original selection shape. When checked, the selection shape is made more rounded with increasing Radius values.

 Feathering can also be applied to a selection from the context toolbar.

 In addition to the modifications discussed here, you can also [refine the edges of your selection](#). This option is available from the context toolbar and the **Select** menu.

SEE ALSO:



Refining pixel selection edges

Once a selection has been created in the Pixel Persona, you can refine its edges to ensure your selection is as accurate as needed.

For very fine selection, e.g. of hair against a colored background, use an adjustment brush as part of the refinement to 'brush-in' fine detail.



Settings

The following settings can be adjusted from the dialog:

- **Preview**—sets the way your selection and page display. Select from the pop-up menu.
- **Matte Edges**—when selected (default), the selection area closely follows image edges. If this option is off, selection doesn't follow image edges which is useful for more accurately refining straight selection edges.
- **Border width**—expands the selection by adjusting the width of its border. Drag the slider to set the value.
- **Smooth**—determines the curvature of the selection's edge. Drag the slider to set the value.
- **Feather**—determines the softness (opacity) of the transition at the edge of the selection. Drag the slider to set the value.
- **Ramp**—In areas where there is a gradual transition from opaque to transparent pixels it makes the transition sharper and moves the selection in or out, depending on which direction you drag the slider. Fully opaque and fully transparent pixels are unaffected.
- **Adjustment brush**—determines the adjustment brush's refinement mode.
 - **Matte**—re-analyses the selection and attempts to separate foreground detail from the background. Great for selecting hair at the edges of photos, etc.
 - **Foreground**—adds to the selection (revealing more of the foreground).
 - **Background**—deletes from the selection (revealing more of the background).
 - **Feather**—softens the alpha edge of the selection.

- **Width**—sets the width of the brush tip. Type directly in the text box or drag the pop-up slider to set the value.
- **Output**—determines how the selection is applied upon exiting the dialog. Select from the pop-up menu.
 - **Selection**—applies the refinement directly to the selection.
 - **Mask**—applies the refinement to the selection as a mask.
 - **New Layer**—applies the refinement to the selection in a new layer.
 - **New Layer With Mask**—applies the refinement to the selection as a mask in a new layer.

▼ To refine pixel selection edges:

1. Do one of the following:
 - From any selection tool's context toolbar, click **Refine**.
 - From the **Select** menu, select **Refine Edges**.
2. Adjust the settings in the dialog.
3. If you wish to adjust the selection edges by painting, drag on the preview.
4. Click **Apply**.

SEE ALSO:

[Creating pixel selections](#)

[Modifying pixel selections](#)

Creating outline selections

The **Outline** feature allows you to create a new selection based on the outer edges of a previously created selection.



Settings

The following settings can be adjusted from the relevant dialogs:

- **Radius**—controls the width of the selection.
- **Circular**—when enabled, the selection edges become increasingly rounded with growing Radius values.
- **Alignment**—determines the origin for the expansion. Select from the pop-up menu.

▼ To create an outline selection:

1. With a selection in place, from the **Select** menu, select **Outline**.
2. Adjust the settings in the dialog.
3. Click **Apply**.

SEE ALSO:

[Creating pixel selections](#)

Creating outline selections

The **Outline** feature allows you to create a new selection based on the outer edges of a previously created selection.



Settings

The following settings can be adjusted from the relevant dialogs:

- **Radius**—controls the width of the selection.
- **Circular**—when enabled, the selection edges become increasingly rounded with growing Radius values.
- **Alignment**—determines the origin for the expansion. Select from the pop-up menu.

▼ To create an outline selection:

1. With a selection in place, from the **Select** menu, select **Outline**.
2. Adjust the settings in the dialog.
3. Click **Apply**.

SEE ALSO:

[Creating pixel selections](#)